

Lee Conservation Commission
Minutes of Meeting of February 22, 2022

Present: Catherine Fisher (Secretary), Amanda Gourgue (Treasurer), Dawn Genes (Chair), Bill Humm, Dave Shay, Deb Sugerman, Anne Tappan

Alternate Member: Mimi Winder

Select Board Representative: Scott Bugbee

Guest: Jim Brady

Approval of Minutes of January 25, 2022: D. Sugerman moved to accept the minutes as written; D. Shay seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by Lee Conservation Commission (LCC) members.

Treasurer's Report: A. Gourgue reported that there had been no transactions since the LCC meeting on February 25. The total balance stands at \$5,621.89 and is comprised of:

David Allan Fund: \$2,686.69

LCC Account: 2,935.20

OLD BUSINESS

Right to Know Law (RTKL) Information: A. Tappan provided a handout from the NH Municipal Association (NHMA) and gave a brief overview of what members of a public body need to know in order to comply with the State's RTKL. She recommended visiting the NHMA website for more information; an additional source, recommended by D. Genes, is the NH Association of Conservation Commissions (NHACC).

Agencies and Boards Reports: A. Tappan reported that flagging from Jones and Beach is up at the proposed Library expansion site.

Education/Outreach:

Social Media: A. Gourgue reported that from January 24-February 20th, the LCC Facebook (FB) numbers were:

People Reached: 7,228 (down 80%)

Post Engagements: 829 (down 81%)

Page Likes: 7 (down 46%)

The most popular post was C. Fisher's pileated woodpecker article on Feb. 7, which was seen by 2,000 people, had 64 post clicks, and 90 reactions, comments and shares.

A. Gourgue reported that these numbers reflect a downturn only because a post from the previous month went viral, thus skewing this month's numbers, but overall, the numbers remain good.

Articles for E-Crier/FB: C. Fisher reported that she had written four articles.

Barry Conservation Camp; D. Genes reported that she had been contacted by Laura Gund regarding whether the LCC would be sponsoring a campership for last year's recipient who, because the camp was closed due to COVID19, was unable to attend. A. Gourgue moved that the LCC provide up to \$600.00 for a child to attend camp; D. Shay seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by Lee Conservation Commission (LCC) members.

Events:

Apple Tree Pruning Workshop, Town Forest (TF) March 12: A. Tappan reported that there has been good interest in this event, led by Brian Cassidy. The workshop will take place from 1 pm-4pm in the Town Forest's early successional opening behind the Public Safety Complex. Participation will be limited to twelve people, not including the three participating LCC members. Registration will be through Nature Groupie, where the event has been advertised. The workshop may be advertised in the E-Crier.

Tree Identification Walk, Little River Park (LRP), March 19: A. Tappan reported that this event was approved by the BOS at their February 15 meeting. Participation will be limited to fifteen people, not including participating LCC members. The event has been advertised in the E-Crier.

Proposed Moth Night at LRP: C. Fisher reported that she and UNH Cooperative Extension Specialist, Rebecca DiGirolomo are in the early stages of planning an evening of moth-gazing/identification at LRP. The event is penciled in for late spring, but that is likely subject to change. C. Fisher and R. DiGirolomo are planning to invite local moth aficionados to give informative demonstrations, set up displays, and man black light traps.

Jumping Worms: C. Fisher and M. Winder reported on a two-day webinar hosted by Mass. Cooperative Extension on invasive worms. Neither European worms nor Asian jumping worms are native to New England and both are causing serious environmental damage to soils (particularly forest soils), water quality, native plant species, and even historical artifacts such as stone walls. Jumping worms are now present in various properties in Lee, including the Town Forest. Currently, there are no means of eradicating them. Prophylactic measures to prevent spread are strongly recommended, and M. Winder stressed that LCC members, particularly those that take part in monitoring, need to be mindful of wearing clean footwear when visiting properties. A. Tappan suggested that this might be a topic of interest for the Agricultural Commission's Backyard Farming series.

Work Groups Updates:

Invasives: A. Tappan reported that the group is working on action items and didn't meet this month. The group hopes to have an onsite meeting in March.

Website Changes: A. Gourgue, D. Sugerman, and M. Winder provided a mockup of their webpage. The group liked the way Durham Conservation Commission's webpage is organized in a manner, which doesn't overwhelm with information, and they found it a useful reference in designing the LCC's webpage. The page is organized to provide basic information with links

providing more extensive information. D. Sugerman reported that they could not find not information concerning when the LCC was founded; A. Tappan will see if she has that information.

Town Land Summaries: C. Fisher reported that she and D. Shay had completed and shared the conservation easement (CE) summary for Maud Jones Memorial Forest (MJMF). D. Genes suggested adding a line headed “*Updated by*” after the “*Compiled by*” line to provide a place to record when changes are made to the summary and by whom. C. Fisher reported that she and D. Shay will each write up one summary a week; they are currently working on summaries for Garrity Reserve and James Farm, respectively.

Drinking Water: D. Genes reported that, as several group members have been unable, as yet, to participate, the group’s work has been largely on hold. She reported that Don Keirstead, State Resource Conservationist with NRCS, is developing an new aquifer protection zone program designed to provide landowners with remuneration for conservation work that improves drinking water quality, and suggested this may have potential as a funding source.

Lee Trails Committee (LTC) Projects:

MJMF: D. Sugerman reported that she, C. Fisher and D. Shay met with Don Quigley and LTC members Martin Thornton, Chris Regan and Dennis Regan to view the proposed Glacial Erratic Trail laid out by D. Quigley. Both C. Fisher and D. Shay reported that they could see no problems with the trail. D. Shay reported that the proposed bridge site is situated where the banks are elevated high above the stream. D. Sugerman moved that the LCC approve of the new trail located near the 155 side of MJMF, and C. Fisher seconded. Members discussed the proposal. A. Tappan voiced concerns about approving any proposed trails while the ground is snow-covered and prior to being able to see the site during spring rains flush. Members voting in favor of the motion to approve the new trail were C. Fisher, A. D. Genes, Gourgue, B. Humm, D. Shay, and D. Sugerman; A. Tappan abstained. D. Shay will submit a Permit by Notification to the Department of Environmental Services for the trail’s bridge crossing.

AARP Grant: D. Sugerman reported that she had attended a Zoom informational meeting presented by AARP and learned that last year there were more than 3500 grant applicants; AARP funded 244. She will contact the NH AARP office for suggestions and to get an idea of what kind of funding is available.

NEW BUSINESS:

Request for Aerial Map of Brady Conservation Easement: J. Brady asked for a copy of the aerial map of the conservation easement on his property. D. Genes will deliver a copy of the map on February 23.

Car Wash Proposal on Route 4: D. Genes reported that she had received an email from a surveying company regarding a client who is interested in putting a car wash on Route 4. This proposal will come before the LCC at the March meeting.

Aquatic Resource Mitigation (ARM) Grant:

Properties: D. Genes discussed the possibility of applying for an ARM grant to fund the purchase of one of the properties ranked previously by the LCC. Tract # 1 has considerable frontage on the Lamprey River, and was ranked the preferred tract by the majority of the LCC; Tract #2 abuts Little Hook and Wiswall Roads; Tract #3 abuts Rtes. 125 and 152 and Gile Road. Southeast Land Trust (SELT) has interest in the properties and both D. Genes and B. Humm have been in touch with them regarding ARM grant funding. D. Genes will contact SELT to request information about the status of the properties.

Old Mill Reserve: A. Tappan discussed the possibility of restoring the wetland at the reserve. The pond in the center has filled in and should be restored. She suggested D. Keirstead (NRCS) might have an interest in such a project

Wish List of Properties of Conservation Value: D. Genes suggested that the LCC work on developing a list of high priority properties needing protection or of conservation value. B. Humm suggested using the co-occurrence map to help evaluate properties that abut other easements and/or are of high conservation value. LCC members will meet in March on a date to be determined.

Dog Easter egg hunt, LRP: Participants at the event will use the Forest Loop Trail. S. Bugbee reported that the BOS has approved the event, pending LCC approval. As there were no problems following last year's event, and providing participants comply with the list of conditions stipulated by the LCC last year, the LCC has no objections.

Pollinator Pathways Partnership with Newmarket Conservation Commission (NCC): A. Gourgue reported that she had been contacted by Melissa Sharples, NCC Vice Chair and FB page moderator, about holding a combined informational presentation with Pollinator Pathways in April to be held at the Newmarket Town Hall. D. Genes suggested the possibility of scheduling an additional presentation in Lee later in the year.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, March 29, 2022

Submitted by: _____

Catherine Fisher